

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 SCS-03

SCCT-01 DHA-02 CCO-00 OC-05 OPR-02 USSS-00 SCA-01

A-01 SY-05 FDRE-00 SSO-00 /117 W

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R 301310Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6447

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

OYUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3706

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF60

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FROM AMBASSADOR

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E.O. 11652: /A

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUT ATMOSPHERICS -- END OF ROUND 4

REF: EMBTEL 12118

SUMMARY:

MATERIAL AND HUMAN LOSSES INCURRED DURING ROUND 4 IN LEBANON HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUS.

1. WITH REESTABLISHMENT OF SECURITY IN BEIRUT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOOK AROUND THE TOWN A BIT. I QUESTION WHETHER OUR REPORTING OR PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE TRANSMITTED TO THOSE FOLLOWING LEBANESE AFFAIRS THE ENORMITY OF THE DAMAGE THAT THIS RELATIVELY SOPHISTICATED CITY HAS ENDURED. AS NOTED IN REFTEL, FIGURE OF \$2.25 BILLION AS OVER-ALL COST TO ECONOMY FOR ALL FOUR ROUNDS SEEMS REASONABLE. THE DAMAGE ALONE TO THE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS DURING THIS LAST ROUND MUST BE IN THE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. ONE OF THE WORST HIT AREAS, SOUK SURSOCK, REMINDED ME OF THE STREETS OF MANNHEIM IN 1945, WITH RUBBLE FOUR OR FIVE FEET ACROSS THE NARROW THOROUGHFARE. OTHER STREETS THROUGH THE AIN RUMMANEH AREA HAVE ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR SHOPS DESTROYED, AND MANY ENTIRE BUILDINGS GUTTED. AS YET WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY MAJOR, FOR THE LEBANON, FACTOR HAVING BEEN DESTROYED AS HAPPENED DURING THE THIRD ROUND, BUT MANY OF THE SMALL ARTISANAT SHOPS ARE NOTHING MORE THAN BURNT-OUT SHELLS. THE GOVERNMENT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY UNDERTAKE SOME PROGRAM TO INDEMNIFY THOSE WHOSE MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT IT WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST MORE THAN THE BAREST MINIMUM OF THOSE AFFECTED AND THOSE WHO DO RECEIVE SOME ALLEVIATION WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE POLITICAL CRONIES OR PAYERS OF BAKSHEESH TO LOCAL POLITICAL HACKS.

2. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PHYSICAL DAMAGE HAS SUNK IN YET ON THE LEBANESE BODY POLITIC. NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN REplete WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BUT UNTIL ONE CAN EYEBALL IT, THE ENORMITY OF THE SITUATION DOES NOT COME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THROUGH. MOST ENTERPRISES CONTINUE TO PAY WAGES TO ABSENT EMPLOYEES AND MANY WILL BE SHUT DOWN FOR SOME TIME DUE TO SHORTAGES, TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES, ETC. HOWEVER, ONCE AGAIN IT IS THE LITTLE MAN WHO WILL BEAR THE BURDEN, NOT ONLY OF LOST INCOME BUT ALSO PAYING FOR THE PROFIT-TAKING WE SAW WHEN BREAD SOLD FOR THREE TIMES ITS NORMAL RATE, VEGETABLES AT LEAST TWICE, ETC. IT IS THE TAXI CAB DRIVER, THE SMALL SHOPKEEPERS, AND OTHER

SELF-EMPLOYED WHO WERE REALLY HURT. WHAT THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WILL BE WE CANNOT AT THIS TIME FORECAST.

3. AMONGH THOSE WHO REALIZE THE DISASTER THAT HAS BEFALLEN THE COUNTRY IS ELIAS SARKIS, GOVERNOR OF THE CENTRAL BANK, WHO STATED HE DID NOT SEE WHY ONE PENNY OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT SHOULD COME INTO THE LEBANON IN THE FORESEE-ABLE FUSIRE OR BE INVESTED BY LEBANESE IN REBUILDING FACILITIES UNTIL A SOUND POLITICAL SOLUTION IS FOUND TO THE CURRENT PROBLEMS. HE DISCOUNTS GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO HAVE LOST EVERYTHING AND PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST ONE QUARTER OF BEIRUT'S HARD WORKING LITTLE BOURGEOISIE IS ON THE VERGE OF DESTITUTION.

4. HUMAN LOSSES ARE EQUALLY DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE. UNIDENTIFIED REMAINS ARE BEING FOUND EVERY DAY AND NO ONE HAS ANY IDEA OF THE NUMBER OF CADAVERS THAT ARE STILL IN BURNT-OUT PORTIONS OF THE CITY. OUR OWN BEST ESTIMATE IS THAT DEAD IN THE LEBANO SINCE THE INCEPTION OF ROUND FOUR INCLUDING ZAHLE, TRIPOLI-ZAGHORTA AND BEIRUT TOTAL MORE THAN 500. WITH APPROXIMATELY ONLY 3 MILLION LEBANESE, THIS LOSS IS TRAGIC. WOUNDED ARE NOT KNOWN BUT WE BELIEVE ARE MUCH LESS PROPORTIONATELY TO DEAD THAN ONE EXPERIENCED IN VIET NAM, KOREA, ETC. THIS IS NOT DUE TO ANY FORTUITOUS CIRCUMSTANCES BUT RATHER TO THE FACTS THAT MANY WERE MURDERED AND THE QUASI TOTAL ABSENCE OF ANY ORGANIZED CARE OF THE WOUNDED WHICH RESULTED IN AN INORDINATELY HIGH PROPORTION DYING UNATTENDED OR DUE TO ABSENCE OF MEDICAL FACILITIES.
GODLEY

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